Title: Laurentius Corvinus' "Carminum structura" against the Background of Medieval and Early Renaissance Treatises on Metre

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Abstract: The article describes the sources Laurentius Corvinus may have relied on while composing his *Carminum structura* and gives a brief outline of the method chosen by him to teach the art of ancient versification.

Key words: Laurentius Corvinus, Latin metre, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Horace, Boethius

The aim of this article is not a full overview of the topics discussed by Laurentius Corvinus in his *Carminum structura* or a detailed presentation of his metrical analyses, but rather an introduction to a fuller study, which will be presented elsewhere, focused on the sources Corvinus might have relied on while composing his treatise.

The Renaissance was a time of revival, amongst many others, of studies on ancient metres and their application in composing Latin poems. The attention paid in the Middle Ages to understanding ancient metrical doctrines was very limited. Even though the art of correct, beautiful writing style was the subject of many medieval treatises or at least chapters in many grammatical, poetical or rhetorical studies, and the art of writing poetry was among the main topics discussed, metrical questions, if discussed at all,[1] were the least and the rarest

[1] Cf. e.g. the treatise by Matthew of Vendôme (*Matthaei Vindocinensis "Ars versificatoria"*. Thesim proponebat Facultati litterarum parisiensi L. Bourgain. Paris 1879; E. Faral: *Les*

among the problems addressed and limited to a few chosen subjects of Latin versification.

Some of the treatises dealt with rhythmic poetry only,[2] i.e. with medieval Latin verses based not on the number of feet and weight of syllables, but on the number of syllables and consonance of sounds.[3]

Arts poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe siècle: recherches et documents sur la technique littéraire du Moyen Âge. Paris 1962, pp. 106–193), which opens (I 1) with a clear declaration: *Non enim aggregatio dictionum, dinumeratio pedum, cognitio temporum facit versum, sed elegans junctura dictionum, expressio proprietatum et observatum uniuscujusque rei epitethum*. Thus, although the author frequently refers to dactylic hexameter or pentameter (and criticises leonines (II 43)), none of his observations is strictly metrical. Cf. also *Ars versificatoria* of Gervase of Melkley (E. Faral: *Les Arts poétiques…*, pp. 328–330 (brief summary only); *Gervais von Melkley. "Ars poetica"*. Kritische Ausgabe von H.J. Gräbener. Münster 1965), *Poetria nova* and *Documentum de modo et arte dictandi et versificandi* of Geoffrey of Vinsauf (P. Leyser: *Historia poetarum et poematum medii aevi*. Halae Magdeburgicae 1721, pp. 861–978 (only *Poetria nova*); E. Faral: *Les Arts poétiques…*, pp. 195–320) or *De metrico dictamine* of Vincentius Heremita (Ch. Fierville: *Une grammaire latine inédite du 13e siècle, extraite des manuscrits no 465 de Laon et no 15462 (fonds latin) de la Bibliothèque nationale*. Paris 1886, pp. 1–6), where only the rhythmisized or rhymed types of verses are discussed (*versus leonini*, *caudati*, *reciproci*, etc.) with no indication of feet or other strictly metrical features.

[2] Cf. e.g. Pietro da Isolella: *De rithmico dictamine* (*Reliquiae antiquae. Scraps from Ancient Manuscripts, Illustrating Chiefly Early English Literature and the English Language*, vol. 1. Eds. T. Wright, J. Orchard Halliwell. London 1845, pp. 30–32; Ch. Thurot: *Extraits de divers manuscrits latins pour servir à l'histoire des doctrines grammaticales au Moyen-Âge*. Paris 1869, pp. 453–457; Ch. Fierville: *Une grammaire…*, pp. 109–115; G. Mari: *I trattati medievali di ritmica latina*. Milano 1899, pp. 11–16), Master Simon di Vercelli – modified version of *De rithmico dictamine* (Ibidem, pp. 17–22), Nicolò Tibino (without title; Ibidem, pp. 95–115), anonymous *Ars* from Monaco (*versus de rithmico dictamine*; Ibidem, pp. 91–94), anonymous redaction of *De rithmico dictamine* (Ibidem, pp. 23–27), anonymous *Regulae de rithmis* (Ibidem, pp. 28–34).

[3] See e.g. Beda: *De arte metrica* XXIV: *De rhythmo* (*Grammatici latini*, vol. 7. Ed. H. Keil. Lipsiae 1880, p. 258): *Videtur autem rhythmus metris esse consimilis, quae est verborum modulata compositio, non metrica ratione, sed numero syllabarum ad iudicium aurium examinata, ut sunt carmina vulgarium poetarum*; Alberic of Monte Cassino: *Rationes dictandi* II (L. Rockinger: *Briefsteller und Formelbücher des eilften bis vierzehnten Jahrhunderts*. Abt. 1. München 1863, p. 9): *Dictaminum autem alia sunt metrica, alia rithmica, alia prosaica. Metricum dictamen est litteralis editio que certis mensuris pedum et temporum conpetenter extinguitur. Rithmicum sane dictamen est quod certa numerorum lege sillabatim colligitur*; Thomas of Capua (*Die "Ars dictandi" des Thomas von Capua*. Ed. E. Heller. Heidelberg 1929, p. 14): *Metricum* [scil. *dictamen*] *denominatur a* metron *grece, quod est* mensura *latine, quia sub certa pedum et syllabarum mensura consistit. Rhythmicum dicitur a* rhyma *vel a* rhythmon, *quod est* distinctio *vel* definitio, *quia sub certa computatione syllabarum cum finali consonantia distinguitur sive etiam definitur*; Bene of Florence, *Candelabrum* III 3–11 (*Bene Florentini "Candelabrum"*. Ed. G.C. Alessio. Padova 1983, pp. 89–90): *Tria dictandi genera distinguntur, scilicet prosaicum, metricum et rithmicum vel etiam aliquod ex his mixtum.* […] *Metricum vero dictamen est illud in quo sillabarum quantitas et pedum connexio legittima observatur, ut:* Carmina qui condam studio florente peregi. *Et dicitur a* metron*, quod est* mensura*, quoniam in eo sillabe ratione temporis mensurantur. Rithmicum est illud quod paritatem sillabarum et finalem consonantiam sine ulla temporum consideratione observat, hoc modo:* Ave mater Salvatoris / Vas electum, vas honoris / Vas celestis gratie. / Ab eterno

As to the strictly metrical problems covered, information about feet was amongst the basics.[4] Nevertheless, as medieval treatises were focused not on abstract metrical theory or an analysis of the verses of ancient poets, but on practical application of the metres in composing poems, authors often limited the number of feet discussed to those which were used those days (*quibus utimur*). In some cases they listed three feet only: dactyl, spondee and trochee (Paulus Camaldulensis[5]), in others five: dactyl, spondee, trochee, anapaest and proceleumatic (Pietro da Isolella[6]), or six: dactyl, spondee, trochee, anapaest, tribrach and iambus (e.g. Alexander of Villedieu[7]).

The same practical approach resulted in a great interest in prosody, which became the main subject of metrical treatises. Since quantity distinctions were lost and the strong stress accent took on greater importance in medieval Latin, those who wanted to compose verses in quantitative measures had to learn the rules of vowel length and syllable weight. At first, there was a tendency to list most important words with prosody indicated either by the ancient poetic examples quoted,[8] or by the position the words held in a poetical, alphabetical dictionary composed in

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vas provisum, / Vas insigne, vas excisum / Manu sapientie. *Et dicitur a* rithmon, *quod est* numerus, *quia ibi certa requiritur discretio sillabarum*. See also L. Rockinger: *Briefsteller…*, p. 103; Ch. Thurot: *Extraits…*, p. 418.

[4] Cf. e.g. Aldhelm: *De metris et enigmatibus ac pedum regulis*; Remigius [Autissiodorensis]: *Fundamentum artis metrificandi*. Deventer 1485; Ebrardus Bethuniensis: *Graecismus*. I 4. Strassburg 1487.

[5] Paulus Camaldulensis: *Introductiones de notitia versicandi* III 3 (V. Sivo: "Le *Introductiones de notitia versificandi* di Paolo Camaldolese (testo inedito del sec. XII ex.)." *Studi e ricerche, Istituto di civiltà classica e orientale* 1982, vol. 5, p. 143): *Pedes vero sunt centum viginti quattuor. Moderni tamen non utuntur nisi tribus pedibus dactilo, spondeo et trochaeo.*

[6] Pietro da Isolella: *Compendium grammaticae* IX: *de re metrica* (Ch. Fierville: *Une grammaire…*, pp. 94 and 96): *Tres sunt pedes quibus utimur in nostris carminibus: scilicet dactilus et trocheus et anapestus. Dactilus constat ex* […]. *Spondeus constat ex* […]. *Trocheus constat ex* […]. *Alii quoque pedes in nostris carminibus reperiuntur, scilicet: proceleusmaticus, ut in hoc Virgilii:* Herent parietibus scale, postesque sub ipsos, *et anapestus, ut in hoc exemplo Virgilii*: Fluviorum rex Eridanus, camposque per omnes. The fact that there is an unexpected mention of spondee (*Spondeus constat ex*) and that the information about anapaest is repeated twice (*Tres sunt pedes* […] *anapestus* […]. *Alii quoque pedes* […] *et anapestus*) indicate that the text is mutilated and should be corrected to sound similarly to that of Paulus Camaldulensis (*Tres sunt pedes quibus utimur in nostris carminibus: scilicet dactilus et trocheus et spondeus*).

[7] *Tertia pars doctrinalis alex. hec tria continens capita: de versificatoria et syllabarum quantitate, de prosodia accentuumque ratione, de figuris et dicendi tropis*. Liptzk 1502: *Istinxere pedes antiqua poemata plures. / Sex partita modis satis est divisio nobis: / dactilus et spondeus, exinde trocheus, anapestus, / jambus cum tribracho possunt precedere metro.* Likewise in the earlier treatise of Remi d'Auxerre (*Fundamentum artis metrificandi*) who listed all main feet, but discussed at length only these six.

[8] Cf. the examples of *Florilegium prosodiacum* given by J. Leonhardt: "Classical Metrics in Medieval and Renaissance Poetry: Some Practical Considerations." *Classica et Mediaevalia* 1996, vol. 47, p. 309.

dactylic hexameters (e.g. *Celum, celestes, cerasus, celer atque cerastes.* / *Cenum cum cena, cedes, cenobia, cera*[9]), or by the construction of metrical feet to which the words were classified (Aldhelm[10]). Over time, however, authors became more interested in the rules governing the weight of the first, middle and final syllables (*de primis, mediis et ultimis syllabis*) and the length of the vowels as determined by the phonetic conditions and inflection (e.g. Beda,[11] Remi d'Auxerre,[12] Tebaldus of Piacenza,[13] Paulus Camaldulensis,[14] Alexander of Villedieu or Pietro da Isolella[15]).

The most popular measures in those times were dactylic hexameter and elegiac distich. Many authors limited their discussion to these two only (e.g. Aldhelm, Matthew of Vendôme,[16] Paulus Camaldulensis,[17] Alexander of Villedieu[18] or Eberhard the German[19]). The widespread popularity of these metres was probably responsible for the small number of feet given in some treatises – only the feet used in either hexameter or pentameter were deemed important. Dactyl and spondee are obvious. Trochee can stand at the end of the hexameter.[20] Anapaest and proceleumatic occur, according to an incorrect analysis of Pietro da Isolella, in Vergil's hexameters.[21] Alexander of Villedieu, on the other hand,

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[9] *Summarium Heinrici* II, XII 486–487 (*Summarium Heinrici*. Vol. 1: *Textkritische Ausgabe der ersten Fassung, Buch I–IX*. Ed. R. Hildebrandt. Berlin–New York 1974, p. 83).

[10] *De pedibus* ("Aldhelmus. De metris et enigmatibus ac pedum regulis." In: *Aldhelmi opera*. Ed. R. Ehwald. Berolini 1919, pp. 150 ff.).

[11] *De arte metrica* II–VIII (*Grammatici Latini*. Ed. H. Keil…, pp. 229 ff.).

[12] Remigius [Autissiodorensis]: *Fundamentum artis metrificandi…*

[13] Theobaldus Placentinus: [*Regulae de longis et brevibus syllabis*]. UPenn Ms. Codex 918. Italy, ca. 1200.

[14] *Introductiones de notitia versicandi* <II: *De syllaba*> (V. Sivo: "Le *Introductiones de notitia versificandi* di Paolo Camaldolese"…, pp. 131–142).

[15] *Compendium grammaticae* IX: *de re metrica* (Ch. Fierville: *Une grammaire*…, pp. 100–108).

[16] Although Matthew is not much interested in versification, he explores two measures – hexameter and pentameter – solely from the point of view of their aesthetic quality, which he mentions in the preface – see footnote 1.

[17] *Introductiones de notitia versicandi* <IV: *De metris*> (V. Sivo: "Le *Introductiones de notitia versificandi* di Paolo Camaldolese"…, pp. 145–146).

[18] *Tertia pars doctrinalis…*

[19] *Laborintus* – see E. Faral: *Les Arts poétiques*…, pp. 336–377; P. Leyser: *Historia poetarum*…, pp. 796–854 (under the name of Eberhard of Béthune). Though Eberhard, like Matthew of Vendôme, is not much interested in the art of versification, he touches on dactylic hexameter and pentameter, paying more attention to rhythmic poetry, for which he gives poetical examples.

[20] See Paulus Camaldulensis III 3 (V. Sivo: "Le *Introductiones de notitia versificandi* di Paolo Camaldolese…," p. 145): *Tamen trochaeum in fine uersus ponunt*; Pietro da Isolella: *Compendium grammaticae* IX: *de re metrica* (Ch. Fierville: *Une grammaire*…, p. 94): *In exametro carmine* […] *trocheus tantum stat in fine*; Alexander of Villedieu: *Doctrinale* III: *Versibus hexametris* […] *nulla datur preter quam sexta trocheo.*

[21] *Compendium…* (Ch. Fierville: *Une grammaire*…, p. 96): *Proceleusmaticus, ut in hoc Virgilii*: Herent parietibus scale, postesque sub ipsos, *et anapestus, ut in hoc exemplo Virgilii*: Fluviorum rex Eridanus, camposque per omnes. *Parietibus* was probably measured as four light and one

holds that anapaest may, according to the chosen analysis, occur in the fourth or the fifth foot of the pentameter (as to the proceleumatic, he informs that it was admitted in antiquity but is not allowed in his days – hence it is lacking in Alexander's list of main feet).[22] Iambus, according to Alexander, may appear in the third foot of the pentameter, while tribrach in the third or the last foot of the same measure.[23]

From a great variety of ancient lyric metres only the measures of two poets received a considerable attention: Horace's and Boethius' (e.g.[24] Lupus Servatus – the metres of Boethius,[25] Papias – the metres of Boethius after Lupus and the metres of Horace after Servius,[26] Hugh of St. Victor – the metres of Boethius after Lupus,[27] John of Garland – the metres of Horace,[28] Nicholas Trivet – the metres of Boethius explained in his large commentary to *Consolatio philosophiae*,[29] or Matteo Ronto – critical analysis of the metres of Boethius[30]). Their measures were analysed and presented also, if not mostly, for practical reasons – to compose poems the examples of which we find e.g. in the compositions of Hermann of Reichenau,[31] Rupert,[32]

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heavy syllable, while *Fluviorum* as two light and two heavy syllables (in both cases a consonantization of *i* was overlooked).

[22] *Tertia pars doctrinalis…*: *Quarta penthametri quintave locas anapestum.* […] *Et proceleumaticum posuit quandoque vetustas, / nunc nullus ponit*.

[23] Ibidem: *Pentametri tribracho sedes patet ultima tantum, / iambo vel nulla vel tantum tertia detur. / Forte sibi sedem tribrachus dare possit eandem*.

[24] Metrical analyses of Horatian poems are also preserved in some editions and commentaries to his Odes – see e.g. *Pseudacronis scholia in Horatium vetustiora*. Ed. O. Keller. Vol. 1. Lipsiae 1902.

[25] [*De metris Boethii*] (*Anicii Manlii Severini Boetii Philosophiae consolationis libri quinque*. Ed. R. Peiper. Lipsiae 1871, pp. xxiv–xxix).

[26] Papias: *Elementarium doctrinae rudimentum*. Venedig 1496, *s.v. Carminum varietates apud Boetium* and *Carminum varietates in odis Horatii*.

[27] Hugo de Sancto Victore: *Opera propaedeutica*. Ed. R. Baron. Notre Dame, Indiana 1966.

[28] *Ars de himnis usitatis* and *xix ode que sunt diverse in Oratio.* In: *Parisiana poetria de arte prosaica, metrica et rhythmica* (G. Mari: *I Trattati…*, pp. 60–78).

[29] *Exposicio Fratris Nicolai Trevethi Anglici Ordinis Predicatorum super Boecio De consolacione*. Ed. E.T. Silk (Microfilm in the Library of Congress) 1986.

[30] [*Genera metrorum Boecii*] – see O. Grillnberger: "Matteo Ronto." *Studien und Mittheilungen aus dem Benedictiner- und dem Cistercienser-Orden* 1891, vol. 12, pp. 17–28 and 314–326.

[31] Hermannus Contractus – see E. Dümmler: "Opusculum Herimanni." *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 1867, vol. 13, pp. 385–434.

[32] See E. Dümmler: "Zur Geschichte des Investiturstreites im Bisthum Lüttich." *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 1886, vol. 11, pp. 175–194; B. Hauréau: "Notice sur un poème contenu dans le numéro 386 des manuscrits de Cambrai." *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale et autres bibliothèques* 1886, vol. 31, part 2, pp. 165–194; A. Cauchie: "Poème de Rupert sur les malheurs de l'église de Liège." In: Idem: *La querelle des investitures dans les diocèses de Liège et de Cambrai*. Vol. 2: *Le schisme (1092–1107)*. Louvain 1891, pp. 45–66; H. Böhmer: "Monachi cuiusdam exulis S. Laurentii de calamitatibus ecclesiae Leodiensis opusculum." *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Libelli* 1897, vol. 3, pp. 622–641.

Metellus of Tegernsee[33] or John of Garland.[34] Other than Horatian or Boethian measures are mentioned very rarely – as e.g. the metres of Martianus Capella (Hugh of St. Victor) or Seneca (Lovato dei Lovati).

One of the characteristics of some medieval treatises on versification is that they themselves are versified. Thus, e.g. Geoffrey of Vinsauf wrote his *Poetria nova* in dactylic hexameters, Alexander of Villedieu his *Doctrinale* in leonine hexameters, while John of Garland in his *Parisiana poetria* used mostly prose, but in the chapter on the metres of Horace (*xix ode que sunt diverse in Oratio*) the metrical analyses are given in elegiac couplets.[35] A commentator on Geoffrey's *Poetria nova* explains the practice as follows: "[I]t is one thing to write about verse, another to write in verse. Virgil wrote in verse, but not about verse; Donatus wrote about verse, but not in verse. This author does both. […] He writes verse while giving the precepts of verse. And thus he does what he teaches, which is the custom of a good teacher."[36] The same practical, didactic aim was reached by illustrating the theory with entire poems written by the authors of treatises themselves, and not only by single examples drawn from ancient literature (as for instance in Matthew of Vendôme,[37] Eberhard the German[38] or John of Garland[39]).

When in 1453 the Italian humanist, Niccolò Perotti, sent to a papal librarian Giovanni Tortelli his treatise on versification (*De generibus metrorum*, perhaps together with a shorter treatise *De metris Horatii et Boethii*), he expressed the following opinion about his work: "I shall send you something else, Father, with my brother, a short treatise that I have recently composed on metres; in this work I have surveyed almost all kinds of metres, and I have rendered a subject hitherto unknown very easy to grasp; which was certainly a very necessary thing to have in our language, since we had nothing of the kind of any value."[40]

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[33] See *Die Quirinalien des Metellus von Tegernsee: Untersuchungen zur Dichtkunst und kritische Textausgabe*. Ed. P.Ch. Jacobsen. Leiden–Köln 1965.

[34] *Parisiana poetria…* (G. Mari: *I Trattati…*, pp. 35–80)

[35] See G. Mari: *I Trattati…*, pp. 63–78; G. Mari: "Poetria magistri Johannis anglici de arte prosayca, metrica et rithmica." *Romanische Forschungen* 1902, vol. 13, pp. 883–965.

[36] *An Early Commentary on the "Poetria Nova" of Geoffrey of Vinsauf*. Ed. M.C. Woods. New York 1985, p. 6: *[A]liud est agere de versibus et aliud versifice. Virgilius agit versifice et non de versibus. Donatus autem de versibus et non versifice. Iste auctor utrumque facit.* […] *Versificatur dans precepta de versibus. Et ita ipse agit quod docet. Quod est boni doctoris de consuetudine.* English translation: M.C. Woods.

[37] *Matthaei Vindocinensis "Ars versificatoria"…*; E. Faral: *Les Arts poétiques…*, pp. 106–193. The poems are also edited by T. Wright and J. Orchard Halliwell in: *Reliquiae antiquae…*, vol. 2, pp. 257–271.

[38] *Laborintus* – see E. Faral: *Les Arts poétiques…*, pp. 336–377; P. Leyser: *Historia poetarum…*, pp. 796–854 (under the name of Eberhard of Béthune).

[39] *Parisiana poetria* mainly in the chapters *Ars de himnis usitatis* and *xix ode que sunt diverse in Oratio* where each metre discussed is supplied with a poetical example.

[40] K. Friis-Jensen: "Perotti's Epistolary Treatises on Metrics." *Renæssanceforum* 2011, vol. 7, p. 85: *Mittam etiam ad Paternitatem vestram per eundem germanum meum opusculum quod-*

Though Perotti's words seem to indicate a turn in metrical studies in the time of Renaissance, the change was neither quick nor easy. In fact, except for the Perotti's work, the first Renaissance treatises on metre were still very medieval in character. This is especially true for the ones written in the 15th century and thus for those on which Corvinus might have relied while composing his *Carminum structura* and which therefore stand at the centre of our interest.

Their main characteristic is the purpose they served – it was, as in the Middle Ages, purely didactic and connected not so much with reading as with composing poetry. This, of course, severly limited the subject matter treated by the authors. Thus, prosody remains one of the main problems discussed, as in the handbooks of Franciscus Mataratius,[41] Omnibonus (Leonicenus) Vincentinus,[42] Robert Gaguin,[43] Conrad Celtis (Corvinus' master),[44] Johannes Maius Romhiltensis[45] or Antonio Mancinelli.[46]

Hexameter and pentameter were the main measures examined, though studies devoted to them tended to be more detailed (as in the works of Franciscus Mataratius, Maximus (Pacificus)[47] or Johannes Maius Romhiltensis). The lyric metres, even if sometimes illustrated with verses of other ancient authors (e.g. Seneca, Catullus, Persius), were still basically those of Horace and Boethius (as in Niccolò Perotti,[48] Robert Gaguin,[49] Jacobus Sentinus Ricinensis,[50] Cristoforo Landino[51] and Conrad Celtis). Both of these authors were held in the highest esteem, though Horace's poetry was much widely imitated. Research in other ancient metres developed in the 16th century.

Though the content of the treatises, as compared with the medieval ones, remained basically the same, their form was significantly altered – they are no longer

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dam quod nuper composui de metris, ubi fere omnia metrorum genera complexus sum et rem antea ignotam facillimam reddidi, quod certe erat in lingua nostra pernecessarium, in qua nihil tale habebamus alicuius pretii. English translation: K. Friis-Jensen.

[41] F. Mataratius Perusinus: *De componendis versibus hexametro et pentametro opusculum*. Venetiis 1468 [date mistaken; probably 1478, 1482 or 1487].

[42] Omnibonus Vincentinus: *Brevis et utilissimus ad scandendum tractatus*. Venetiis, ca. 1471.

[43] R. Gaguin: *Ars versificatoria*. Paris 1473, lib. I.

[44] C. Celtis: *Ars versificandi et carminum*. Lipsiae 1494.

[45] J. Maius Romhiltensis: *Opusculum de componendis versibus hexametro et pentametro, et de quibusdam Lyricis carminibus, quae maiori in usu habentur quam caetera*. [No information about the place of publishing] 1488.

[46] A. Mancinelli: *Spica voluminum 4. Versilogus*. Venetiis 1492.

[47] Maximus Pacificus: *De componendo hexametro et pentametro libellus*. Florentiae 1485.

[48] *De metris Horatii et Boethii* in: N. Perotti: *De generibus metrorum*. Verona 1483.

[49] R. Gaguin: *Ars versificatoria*…, book III.

[50] I. Sentinus Ricinensis: *De quibusdam lyricis carminibus tractatulus*. Venetiis 1468.

[51] Critical edition of Horace with large commentary and metrical notes: *Q. Horatii Flacci opera cum interpretationibus Christoph. Landini*. Venetiis 1483.

written in verse, but in prose. The only, as far as I am aware, exception in the 15th century[52] is the *Versilogus* of Antonio Mancinelli written mostly in dactylic hexameters. Occasionally, treatises written in prose include a few precepts written in elegiac distichs (Maximus (Pacificus)), leonines (Conrad Celtis) or dactylic hexameters (Johannes Maius Romhiltensis). The poetic examples of the metres discussed are restricted, as in ancient treatises, to single verses quoted from classical authors. Again, an exception is found in the *Versilogus* of Antonio Mancinelli, where entire poems illustrate three metres: Sapphic stanza, lesser asclepiad and phalaecian. Sometimes a treatise opens (*Versilogus*) and ends with a poem (*Ars versificandi* by Celtis).

Although not very innovative and limited in the scope of the surveyed subjects, early Renaissance treatises had one very important feature which distinguished them from the medieval ones. They were numerous and, thanks to invention of printing, commonly available. The accessibility and variety facilitated the exchange of views, which soon resulted in the growth of metrical studies. In the 15th century, however, the most advanced, complete and respected study was Perotti's *De generibus metrorum*. Despite the fact that both of Perotti's works on metre – *De metris Horatii et Boethii* and *De generibus metrorum* – are firmly based on the works by Servius – on *De metris Horatii* (as well as on *De metris Boethii* by Lupus) and *De centum metris*, respectively – they mark a turn in the field of studies because the purpose they serve is different. First of all, by presenting a kind of new, enlarged and critical version of *Centimetrum*, Perotti restores the descriptive character of ancient handbooks of versification presenting the whole spectrum of both Greek and Latin measures. The choice made by Perotti was not perhaps very happy, as *Centimetrum* seems to abound in abstract, strictly hypothetical structures, but the important step made by Perotti was to reject a purely didactic, as in the previous centuries, aim of his works and to propose a fuller and more critical study focused not only on the measures used in poetic compositions in his days. Secondly, and this is probably his main achievement, Perotti is concerned with the accuracy of the metrical terminology used. During the centuries of manual transcription, ancient treatises were cluttered with errors which spread over all medieval works. Restoration of the proper spelling of metrical terms demanded wider studies of all the available ancient treatises, both Latin and Greek.[53] According to Boldrini, Perotti had an access to the most important Greek treatise on versification – *Encheiridion* written in the 2nd century AD by an Alexandrian grammarian

[52] I omit here the treatise, still medieval in character, written by Mark of Opatowiec. See footnote 54.

[53] N. Perotti: *De generibus…*, p. aii verso: *Incredibile dictu est, quos sustinuimus labores. Adeo quippe omnia non solum praecepta, verum etiam pedum ac metrorum nomina corrupta erant, ut necesse fuerit compluris, non solum latinos, verum etiam graecos, ad ea comperienda libros evolvere.*

Hephaestion, as well as to the commentaries on Hephaestion's work.[54] This allowed him to emend the numerous spelling errors found in the manuscripts of Latin treatises on metre and to restore the correct, original reading of many metrical terms. Of course he did not escape some mistakes in his treatise, but his effort proved the vital necessity for emending the adopted terminology.

If Perotti's work is put at the one end of the scale of the 15th-century treatises on metre, Corvinus' *Carminum structura* is decidedly on the other. Laurentius Corvinus (Lorenz Ra(a)be) from Neumarkt (Środa Śląska) was a Silesian humanist and poet, a student and subsequently lecturer at the University of Cracow, a friend of Nicolaus Copernicus and Conrad Celtis – his master. *Carminum structura* is one of many works written by Corvinus. It was by no means original or exhaustive, but, nonetheless, it was appreciated in its times. It is important as one of the first treatises on metre composed[55] and perhaps also the first published in Poland. As indicated at the end of the treatise, it was written, or at least finished, in Świdnica on the 20th of August 1496. It was published in Leipzig the same year, but the *editio princeps* may have been printed in Cracow.[56]

Wherever its first edition took place, the treatise was written for the students of Cracow (*augustissimi gimnasii Cracoviensis studentibus*), though it was used by students of other universities as well. One of the copies of *Carminum structura*, belonging to a student of Leipzig, was bound together at the end of the 15th century with six other works, some of which were poetic texts, some treated the subject of Latin verse and its composition and one treated the method of letter writing.[57] All of them include various interlinear and marginal glosses by various hands. Kristian Jensen[58] has pointed out that the handwriting found in the marginalia of *Carminum structura* and in the text of the elegy of Tibullus is by the same hand. Judging from the manuscript annotations, Jensen concluded that Corvinus' text

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[54] S. Boldrini: "Il *De metris* di Niccolò Perotti." *Maia* 1998, vol. 50, p. 520: "Efestione, gli *scolia A*, gli *scolia B* e la *Appendix Dyonisiaca* si trovano, tutti insieme, nel codice marciano greco 483, appartenuto al cardinal Bessarione, al cui seguito è Perotti quando scrive il trattato metrico: pensiamo, con ciò, di aver individuato, oltre la fonte, anche il preciso manoscritto da lui utilizzato."

[55] Two small metrical treatises, still medieval in style, were written by Polish authors in the first half of the same century. These were *Metrificale* of Mark of Opatowiec (see A. Brückner: *Średniowieczna poezya łacińska w Polsce*. Vol. 1. Kraków 1892, pp. 11–15; R. Gansiniec: *Metrificale Marka z Opatowca i traktaty gramatyczne XIV i XV wieku*. Wrocław 1960, pp. 5–97) and *Ars metrificandi* of Martin of Żórawica (alias Martinus Rex de Premislia; work unpublished, preserved in only one transcript in the National Library of the Czech Republic: Bibl. Univ. 1144).

[56] There is no agreement among scholars as to the Cracovian edition of *Carminum structura*. If such edition took place, none of the copies survived.

[57] Incunabula of the Keio University Library 031.

[58] K. Jensen: "Exporting and Importing Italian Humanism: The Reception of Italian Printed Editions of Classical Authors and their Commentators at the University of Leipzig." *Italia Medioevale e Umanistica* 2004, vol. 45, pp. 484–485.

was studied by bachelor students, whereas the Tibullus text was used by students working towards a master's degree.

These conclusions are not surprising as *Carminum structura*, though popular in its days, is not a detailed study of any of the subjects touched in it and it is clearly not a full, comprehensive handbook of the metres it presents. It is more an anthology of poems, which serve as poetic examples of the briefly, very briefly indeed, presented theories. Thus, it is not a treatise on metre *sensu stricto*; it is rather a general introduction to poetic composition, partly medieval and partly Renaissance in character, with major stress put on metrical theories and poetic examples of entire songs usually composed by the author himself. In this respect *Carminum structura* differs not only from Perotti's *De generibus metrorum* (written in the ancient manner), but also from the handbook of Corvinus' master – Conrad Celtis, and other metrical treatises written in early Renaissance, in which such methods were altogether abandoned. The method chosen by Corvinus is very similar to the one we find in the chapter *ars de himnis usitatis* of the medieval treatise *Parisiana poetria* by John of Garland. Both briefly discuss the metre and then add a poem composed in the measure discussed – certainly, at least in some cases, written by the author himself. John of Garland, however, gives his metrical precepts in elegiac couplets, while Corvinus in the theoretical parts uses prose only. This differentiates *Carminum structura* also from *Ars versificandi* by Corvinus' master – Celtis, who gave some of the metrical precepts in leonine hexameters.

The problems relating to prosody, less detailed than in Celtis, such as rules governing the weight and division of syllables, are discussed at the end of the treatise. The content of the preliminary remarks, pertaining to general rules of poetical composition, is similar to that of Celtis.

Although the metrical topics discussed constitute the longest, central part of the work, its length is only the result of generous exemplification. Each of the measures treated is illustrated by a poetic example, sometimes several dozen verses long. Most poems are written by Corvinus himself; the authorship of some remains disputable.

The metrical precepts preceding the poems are scant and meagre. Corvinus is focused solely on explaining the etymology of the name given to the metre, numbering its feet and syllables constituting each foot. Except for the dactylic pentameter (which, besides hexameter, is given a slightly more detailed description) none of the measures is discussed sufficiently enough to compose poems in it, as there is, for example, no information about caesuras. Corvinus himself is well aware of them as they are rigorously applied in his own compositions. Such information is, however, unavailable also in other medieval and Renaissance treatises on metre, in which only the caesuras of dactylic hexameter are sometimes examined.

The number of metres presented by Corvinus is limited to 16 structures amongst which there are such well known classical measures as dactylic hexameter, elegiac

distich, Sapphic and Alcaic stanza, lesser and greater asclepiad, glyconic or phalaecian, but also some less common types as, for example, hemiepes masculinum accompanied by an adonean. All of them represent either Horatian or Boethian measures (usually without direct indication of the source). Nonetheless, neither of the two classes is presented fully. In this respect the method of presentation is similar to *Ars versificandi et carminum* by Corvinus' master – Celtis, though both treatises differ in the choice of structures presented (and, as far as I know, Celtis, unlike Corvinus, did not make use of Boethian measures, limiting his own compositions to the metres of Horace).

The terminology used by Corvinus is sometimes medieval and inaccurate. For example, pherecratean is called *pheregracium* – so according to the spelling common in the Middle Ages, when we find also such spellings as *feregratium* or *ferecratium*. The same spelling can be found in Celtis who used Perotti's treatise but obviously ignored his achievements in this field.

There are also more serious mistakes, as, for instance, in the analysis of the hendecasyllable and enneasyllable in the Alcaic stanza. Enneasyllabus is presented as iambic dimeter and is therefore a syllable shorter. The analysis of hendecasyllabus (spondee or iambus + iambus + two dactyls + hypercatalexis)[59] is quite faulty unless we are supposed to apply the hypercatalexis earlier, after the second iambus.

To sum up, the aim of Corvinus' work is purely didactic, not scholarly. Both in the topics discussed and in the form chosen, at least in the central part of the treatise, it is more medieval than Renaissance in character. It might have been supposed to serve as a source of basic information expanded by a teacher and of poetic texts commented on during lectures. The simplicity and didactic character were probably responsible for the popularity of *Carminum structura* which was soon republished several times.

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[59] *In prima eius regione spondeus situatur aut iambus sed raro. In secunda iambus perpetuo locatur. Quartam et tertiam regiones dactilus solus habet. Et est hipercatalecticum propter unius sillabe abundantiam*.